

NEW HAVEN LAND TRUST

Joint Committee on Judiciary
Legislative Office Building, Room 2500
Hartford, CT 06106

Date: 2/23/2016

RE: Testimony for 2/24 public hearing— Raised Bill 144

Dear Co-Chair Coleman, Co-Chair Tong, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,


Please accept this as our testimony (for public hearing held on 2/24/16) in opposition of Raised Bill 144, AAC Land That Is Subject to a Conservation Restriction Held by A Nonprofit Land-Holding Organization.

The New Haven Land Trust is a small non-profit land trust that owns six nature preserves and several community gardens in the city of New Haven. Our primary goal is to encourage residents to use our properties for educational and recreational purposes. As you can imagine, access to open space in an urban environment such as New Haven can sometimes be a challenge. Our properties provide access to open space for residents in neighborhoods all over the city of New Haven.

We oppose Raised Bill 144 because it deletes a provision passed last year by the General Assembly which prevents land subject to a conservation easement held by a land trust from being taken by adverse possession. The threat of adverse possession has been an issue for my organization, given the number of properties we hold and the fact that our resources to monitor our properties and fight adverse possession claims is limited. We have faced several adverse possession challenges in the several years since I have been a part of the Land Trust. These challenges have consumed time and expenses that could have otherwise been used to improve our educational programming, trail infrastructure and youth jobs program. These challenges also threaten the future availability of the parcels we own for public access.

We encourage you to oppose Raised Bill 144 so that land trusts can continue to provide public access and conserve land for the benefit of many Connecticut residents in perpetuity. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,



Justin Elicker
Executive Director